

Ford Site Planning Task Force
May 7, 2007
Lumen Christi Catholic Church

Meeting #6 Summary

Ford Site Planning Task Force members present: Carole Faricy, Co-Chair, William Klein, Co-Chair, Peter Armstrong, Shawn Bartsh, James Bricher, Richard Broderick, Ronnie Brooks, Terri Dooher Fleming, Judy Mitchell (for CP Rail's David Drach), Charles Hathaway, Deborah Karasov, Angela Kline, Scott Malcolm, Gary Marx, Lance Neckar, Jim Reinitz, Dennis Rosemark, Matthew Schuerger, Stuart Simek, Morgan Tamsky, Stephanie Warne, Ellen Watters **Absent:** Dave Sellergren, Bruce Valen, Pamela Wheelock

City Staff, others agency reps or consultants present: Cecile Bedor (PED), Patty Lilledahl (PED), Merritt Clapp-Smith (PED), Luis Pereira (PED), Ward 3 Councilmember Pat Harris, Deana Swetlik and Bill Vitek (EDAW), Bob Close and Bruce Jacobson (Close Landscape Architects), Fred Dock (Iteris), Monte Hilleman (Port Authority), Jeff Patterson (Colliers), Gayle Summers (Highland District Council), Anne Carroll (Capstone), Yujie Bao (Capstone), Tim Dykstal (Capstone), Jake Granholm (Capstone), Ellen Heine (Capstone), Mike Kisch (Capstone), Tamara Downs Schwei (Capstone), Alec More (Capstone), Britta Stein (Capstone), Colin Wheeler (Capstone), Deniz Senay (Capstone).

Others Attending (based on meeting sign-in sheet): Jay Gardner, Ford, John Shardlow, Susan Kimberly, Jane McClure, Jason Hoppin, Michael Belaen, Lynn Hinkle, Charles Nelson, Claudia Dieter, Mary Davis, Zeke and T. Yargici, Wayne Barstad, Joe Schwei, Frank Douma, Joel Clemmer, David Daly, Shelley Miller, Georgia Dietz, Laura Merriam, Matt O'Brien, Sam Newberg, Susan Dworsky, Jacqueline Mosio, Ned Rukavina

Meeting called to order by co-chair Bill Klein at 6:45 PM (following 1 hour presentation of Capstone student project work). Klein asked if there was a motion to approve the Ford Task Force Meeting #5 Summary. Motion and second made. Klein noted a correction for the beginning of the summary, replacing "Klein" with "Faricy" as the main chair of the meeting. No additional changes were suggested, and the summary was approved unanimously.

Jay Gardner, from Ford Land, gave an update on the hydro sale and environmental assessment. Regarding the hydro sale, Gardner stated that Ford is in final negotiations with a single bidder, with a 6 month timeline to transfer the hydro operation license (a 30-yr. license to next renewal) and finalize the sale. Ford is still in discussion with the bidder to explore the possibility of sourcing up to 5 megawatts of power directly to the Ford site.

Gardner said the Phase I environmental assessment of the Ford property is nearly complete. The work is being done by Arcadis, a national firm. The Phase II assessment to follow will be more complicated and done in stages. Outside testing and analysis will be done by mid-summer, but any testing required inside the plant will not begin until the plant ceases operation. Gardner stated that Ford may enter the State of Minnesota Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup Program. If they do this, the environmental assessment information will be available to the public and Ford's environmental consultants will provide information to the Task Force (TF). One of the Task Force members asked about PCB contamination at the New Jersey plant, and if such contamination was possible here. Gardner responded that the PCBs came from oil that cooled transformers, which spilled on the concrete at the New Jersey site. The PCB levels were low and were cleaned up. Gardner was asked if the environmental impact study would include the tunnels. He responded that it likely would.

Gardner said that Ford is still deciding what to do with the steam plant located by the river, and that some interest expressed in the steam plant previously by one of the hydro bidders, is no longer there.

Someone asked what the target date for closure of the plant is. Gardner said that UAW negotiations will begin in September 2007, and that after that, Ford will have a clearer sense of the closure date.

Merritt Clapp-Smith, Ford Site Planning Process project manager, acknowledged the tension between having limited access to information desired to prepare land use scenarios for the site, and the need to keep moving forward on drafting the scenarios. The alternative scenarios being prepared in the Phase I planning need to show a full range of land uses and layouts of the site, in order to provide a context for the Phase II analyses comparing and contrasting future choices for the site. The Phase II planning to begin in Fall 2007 will include an Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) analysis and a fiscal analysis of the scenarios. The City of St. Paul, as the “Responsible Governmental Unit” for the Ford site, will be the client of the AUAR. The City will contract with a firm to perform the AUAR environmental review. Though information on potential contamination at the site may not be fully available when the AUAR process begins, as it emerges the alternative scenarios can be fine tuned (including shifts in the locations of various land uses or road layouts on the site) to accommodate the new information. The AUAR and fiscal analyses will be complete by end of Spring 2008.

Following Clapp-Smith’s remarks, TF members commented on the process to date and moving forward, as summarized below:

- TF members should be allowed to talk about their feelings about the process thus far.
- A desire to use metrics to measure each alternative against the TF vision
- A response from Ford Motor Co. that it is hard for Ford to evaluate the development cost of these schemes and thus determine their affordability
- A desire to look at potential tax base implications of various land use mixes
- The acknowledgement that despite the fact that the TF work is “walking blind” with respect to the site’s contamination, tunnels, and necessary subsidies needed to attract particular types of businesses to the site, that the TF must go forward with a real range of alternatives to “keep all options open.” The AUAR results would help the TF evaluate the scenarios in Phase 2
- Despite the difficult timeline, the TF should use a “values-driven” process, based on what is desired for future generations. Being broader and more thematic is better, focusing on common “values”, such as the need to create family-sustaining jobs, and the need to not only mitigate traffic problems but also to help solve them
- “Planning is an art, not a science”; the TF does not own the property and time is wasted at every meeting talking about process
- So far, the land use schemes have been very conventional LU perspectives, which if carried out, won’t result in real innovation on the site
- The response that the TF lacks knowledge of the exact future, and that TF members who seek innovation should convince the TF with their innovative ideas and arguments

Bill Vitek of EDAW reiterated that this is an iterative process, and that we won’t have all answers at the end of Phase I. He asked the TF what was missing from the current set of schemes, saying that the consultant team is trying to achieve a balance of views, while keeping up with the fast pace of the project. On May 8th, the TF will have a special work session to talk more about the process and schemes, and at the next TF meeting in 2 weeks, the TF will evaluate the land use schemes vs. its established goals/objectives.

Other comments from TF members included the need to identify, in each land use scheme, the number of people per unit, number of jobs per square foot., and the square feet of retail space. Deana Swetlik of EDAW stated that this would be the next step, with the help of Colliers, to estimate the number of jobs and tax base contribution of each scheme, including market absorption of each one.

Jim Reinitz, TF member and UAW member, stated that the UAW is working with a prospective employer to build an electric car somewhere in Minnesota. He said that he thought the City was not discussing economic development, and he hoped to see this as an explicit goal for this process.

Jeff Paterson of Colliers gave a summary of his conclusions from the April 16th TF meeting, as well as

more residential analysis. He reiterated that all housing types could be supported on the site, including an estimated absorption rate of 2 to 4 years. At a minimum, 422 units (in combination with many other uses) could be supported by the market, with a maximum estimate of 1,422 units (net developable acreage), based on the carrying capacity of the site. He said that Colliers was ready to work with EDAW on detailed market analyses of the alternative development scenarios. Upon being questioned by the TF, he stated that the projections are not clear beyond 5-6 years. Regarding senior housing, he said it involved a variety of age-restricted housing typologies based on age groups, including assisted living, with some major care included (the “slow-go” and “no-go” older demographics; 75-85 and 85+ yrs, respectively), and the younger “go-go” seniors that have more income and would like to stay active. Such housing could also follow the “continuum of care” concept. In terms of the Colliers projection of 72 single family homes, they used for context subdivision plats in the vicinity, many of them involving two acre parcels, and others smaller parcels (R1, R2, R3, and R4 single family zoning districts).

Bill Vitek of EDAW reiterated that the 18 land use schemes had now been reduced to 10 land uses schemes, with the obvious ones eliminated (those proposing all open space or all big box retail on the site). The consultant team grouped the themes into those receiving the most positive votes and most negative votes from the TF, and narrowed the 18 down to 8, synthesizing them into conceptual alternative development schemes. They also added two new schemes entitled “Neighborhood 2100,” in which they intentionally chose to forecast the innovation in a development project of the next century, in lieu of a “safe,” market-driven, infill solution.

Assumptions about the schemes included:

- A total of 136 acres
- Densities of residential development:
 - Single Family Detached Traditional – 4 units/acre
Low density = 3-6 housing units/acre
5,000-8,000 sq. ft. lots; 2,400 – 3,900 sq. ft. homes, like along Mississippi River Boulevard
 - Single Family Detached Courtyard – 8/acre
Medium density single family detached = 8-9 housing units/acre;
3-400 sq. ft. lots; 1350-2600 sq. ft. homes
 - Single Family Attached – Townhome
12-20 housing units/acre; “Stacked flats”
1,100-2,000 sq. ft. units; 2- 2 ½ stories in height; all units are accessed from an alley
 - Single Family Attached – Low Density Apartments / Condos / Senior Housing
18-28 housing units/acre;
750-1,250 sq. ft. units;
2-3 stories; primarily surface park
 - Single Family Attached – Medium Density Apartments / Condos / Senior Housing
35-45 housing units/acre;
3-4 stories over ground floor parking
 - Single Family Attached – High Density Apartments / Condos / Senior Housing
60-100+ housing units/acre;
4-8 stories; structured parking
- Senior Housing typically means less traffic, so less parking is typically required

Bill Vitek stated that the schemes will be discussed in 2 weeks at the May 21st Task Force meeting. See <http://www.ci.stpaul.mn.us/depts/ped/fordsite/docs/ten%20land%20use%20schemes,%2005-08-07.pdf> to view the 10 Land Use Schemes

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.